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# CAPT. RACKET

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS.

BY

Charles Townsend.

PRICE 25 Cents.

This latest play by Mr. Townsend will probably be one of his most popular productions; it certainly is one of his best. It is full of action from start to finish. Comic situations follow one after another, and the act-endings are especially strong and and lively. Every character is good and affords abundant opportunity for effective work. Can be played by four men and three women if desired. The same scene is used for all the acts, and it is an easy interior. A most excellent play for repertoire companies. No seeker for a good play can afford to ignore it.

## CHARACTERS.

CAPT. ROBERT RACKET, one of the National Guard. A lawyer when he has nothing else to do, and a liar all the time.....

*Comedy Lead.*

OBADIAH DAWSON, his uncle, from Japan "where they make tea".....

*Comedy Old Man.*

TIMOTHY TOLMAN, his friend, who married for money and is sorry for it.....

*Juvenile Man.*

MR. DALROY, his father-in-law, a jolly old cove.....

*Eccentric.*

HOBSON, a waiter from the "Cafe Gloriana," who adds to the confusion.....

*Utility.*

CLARICE, the Captain's pretty wife, out for a lark, and up to "anything awful".....

*Comedy Lead.*

MRS. TOLMAN, a lady with a temper, who finds her Timothy a vexation of spirit.....

*Old Woman.*

KATY, a mischievous maid.....

*Soubrette.*

TOOTS, the "Kid," Tim's olive branch.....

*Props.*

## SYNOPSIS.

ACT. I. Place: Tim's country home on the Hudson near New York. Time: A breezy morning in September. The Captain's fancy takes a flight and trouble begins.

ACT. II. Place; the same; Time; the next morning. How one yarn requires another. "The greatest liar unhung," Now the trouble increases and the Captain prepares for war.

ACT. III. Place; the same. Time; evening of the same day. More misery. A general muddle. "Dance or you'll die." Cornered at last. The Captain owns up. All serene.

Time of playing: Two hours.

**Order a sample copy, and see for yourself what a good play it is.**

# THE SPINSTERS' CONVENTION

*(The Original "Old Maids' Convention")*

AN EVENING'S ENTERTAINMENT  
IN ONE SCENE

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JAN 18 1900<sup>2</sup>/664

# THE SPINSTERS' CONVENTION.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS.

Josephine Jane Green, President of the Young Ladies' Single Blessedness Debating Society.  
 Priscilla Abigail Hodge, Secretary.  
 Calamity Jane Higgins, Treasurer.  
 Rebecca Rachel Sharpe, who wears artistic dress.  
 Tiny Short, (a very tall lady.)  
 Mary Ann Fraddler.  
 Jerusha Matilda Spriggins.  
 Patience Desire Mann.  
 Sophia Stuckup.  
 Juliet Long, a very tall lady.  
 Betsy Bobbett, should wear corkscrew curls and be gotten up as in "Josiah Allen's Wife."  
 Charity Longface.  
 Cleopatra Belle Brown.  
 Polly Jane Pratt.  
 Violet Ann Ruggles.  
 Belinda Bluegrass, dress-reform advocate.  
 Frances Touchmenot }  
 Hannah Biggerstaff } Candidates.  
 Professor Makeover.  
 The Professor's Assistant.

## PROPERTIES.

Candle, candlestick and snuffers. Large account book with a couple of ribbon book-marks in it. Attached to end of each ribbon a red cardboard heart

about three inches long. These will attract attention when the Secretary reads from her book. A gavel for the President. Birdcages—box of face powder—false teeth—hair switch—suspenders—cuff buttons—tobacco pouch—pipe—cigars.

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### NOTES ON THE PRODUCTION.

This entertainment cannot fail if the public know it is to be given. Hand bills or notices reading "Come to the Spinsters' Convention and see the old maids transformed into beautiful young maidens before your own eyes at the Methodist Church, or, at the opera house," etc., will fill the place at good prices.

During the program the greater the number of local hits you may introduce the more successful the performance is likely to be.

The President must have a good voice, strong and impressive, and the Secretary likewise. The latter must call the roll slowly and distinctly. The old maids must speak loud enough to be heard on the back seats. Five rehearsals are sufficient to get all in working order. The quicker the entertainment is worked up, the better. A week is long enough. In this way the ladies will not get tired out.

Have one intelligent critic, who shall be encouraging in her criticism. Do not allow the participants to criticise one another. Tell them to make all suggestions to the critic. The voting always makes great fun if carried out with spirit.

As elsewhere stated, a plain platform with a piano is all that is required for a stage, but a handsome setting adds much to the entertainment. Matrimonial mottoes on the curtain at the back. Some mirrors at the side for the old maids to look into often are good properties. Small hearts strung on strings and festooned across the stage are also suggestive.

Each old maid must have her special chair and

always return to it and no other. This prevents confusion.

There is a wide latitude in the matter of costumes. Old styles in bonnets, dresses and hair dressing must prevail — old-fashioned fans, work-bags, combs and curls, any old thing may be introduced. Heart-shaped fans made of red paper over a Japanese fan for the foundation are effective. Hand mirrors can be produced from work-bags, together with powder puffs, etc., and sly titivating from time to time indulged in. One old maid may carry an ear trumpet, and make herself conspicuous asking her neighbors what has been said. One or more old maid may produce knitting and work at it during the proceedings. She should be knitting a man's sock.

The Remodeloscope should be a box six to ten feet high, three feet wide and three feet deep. The front of this box should be either painted wood or covered with plain dark red or brown muslin. Near the top place a large dial, which should be a round piece of wood, twenty inches in diameter, covered with white muslin, or painted white, on which twelve ages, from forty to sixty, are printed in large black letters. There should be one black hand or pointer, from the center of the dial, like an ordinary clock. This hand should be attached to a duplicate inside the box, so that a person standing behind may turn the pointer to the age given by the old maid. Below the dial, on the front of the box, have a crank, which the assistant or professor will turn to grind up the old maids. This crank may be connected with a coffee-mill, in which are beans of some kind, that will make a noise while the grinding is going on. On either side of the large box curtains must hang. The old maid should pass behind the curtain on the left and the young person she is supposed to be remodeled into must come out on the right. The box must be set in front of curtains, behind which the old maid really disappears, although this must not be evident to the audience.

# The Spinsters' Convention.

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(The original "Old Maids' Convention.")

SCENE.—*A platform, on which is placed a semicircle of chairs, with a small reading table at c. On the table may be a tall candlestick with lighted candle in it and snuffers at its side. There should also be a large book for the Secretary. For the President a huge gavel may have a bouquet of flowers tied to it. When curtain rises the stage is vacant.*

**Charity Longface.** [*Enters L., carrying bird-cage, umbrella and work bag over her arm.*] I seem to be early for the meeting of the Single Blessedness Debating Society. But I've had a long way to come, and as it takes all day, I had to bring Chirpy with me. [*Indicates the bird.*]

**Polly Jane Pratt.** [*Enters R., with huge heart-shaped fan, on which are the printed words "Love," "Hope," "Matrimony."* She also carries a large lunch box.] Why, how-de-do, Miss Longface. [*They shake hands and kiss.*] I thought I'd be the first one at the meetin'. I'm powerful hungry and thought I'd have a little lunch before we were called to order. [*Opens lunch box, and Charity also produces something to eat from her bag. Enter Priscilla L.*] Why, how-de-do, Priscilla.

**Priscilla.** [*Shaking hands with both Charity and Polly.*] Glad to see you. I just stopped in on my way

to the keers, to see if everything was all ready. I'm going to meet our dear President, who is coming all the way from Bosting. She's been down there in the interests of our society, and she'll be tickled to death to have me meet her at the keers. Good-bye. [*Exit R., after looking around carefully.*]

**Polly.** My, ain't she good, and ain't these seed cakes good? Have some?

[*Enter Jerusha, with bandbox and bird-cage with a cat in it.*]

**Jerusha.** Why, how-de-do. I thought I'd be here first. I wanted to change my bonnet. [*Takes out bonnet and puts in the one she first wears. Takes out hand glass and fixes herself ad lib.*]

**Charity.** What you got in that cage?

**Jerusha.** My sweet little kitten; ain't he cute? He won't hurt the bird.

**Charity.** Yes, he is cute. Where did you get him? What's his name? [*Gives cat some lunch.*]

**Jerusha.** His name's Christopher Columbus Fence-rail, and Mrs. — [*Names some woman who has a large husband.*] gave him to me.

**Polly.** Well, I swan, is she an old maid?

**Jerusha.** Oh, my goodness, no, she's got a whoppin' big fat husband.

**Charity.** How nice! Ain't she lucky?

**Rebecca.** [*Entering, looking around.*] Is this where the convention is to be held?

**Charity.** Yes, come in, Rebecca Sharpe. This is our new hall. Ain't it nice?

**Rebecca.** Yes, it is nice. Ma didn't want me to come to-day. You know it's twenty miles to——, our place, but I said, "I'm goin' and no use to talk to me," fur I'd heerd that —— [*Naming place where the entertainment is given.*] had ever so many good looking bachelors and widowers in it. I'm powerful glad I'm here. It seems like a purty nice town.



**Jerusha.** Yes, it is. That's the reason we're holdin' our convention here. Won't you have a snack. [*Offers her something to eat.*]

**Rebecca.** Thank you, I will. I saw so many eatin' houses as I came along I got real hungry. I just love ginger-snaps and corn-dodgers and men. [*Eats.*] Do you know a sweet dear man smiled at me as I came up the street?

**Jerusha.** Yes, I was on the other side and saw you. I saw *several* men smile as you came up the street.

**Rebecca.** This one was so bashful he kept looking at my feet all the time. So I couldn't smile back at him. Maybe I'll see him again before I leave town. I hope so. I think this is a beautiful city. It has such lovely parks, such lovely streets, and such lovely men. If I don't ketch a husband here now I'll make Ma come here and wait until I do.

Yes, to him I'll come,  
From him I'll never roam,  
And if he wants me for his wife,  
I'll make this my future home.

No, I won't be cooped up in — all my life. Say, wouldn't Ma be surprised to see me walkin' down the street with my arm in my husband's. Say, don't you know, her eyes would stand out like hard boiled eggs. [*Excited.*] My, but I'm getting frustrated. I always do get frustrated when I talk about the men.

**Polly.** Yes, they are exciting. Have another cooky to quiet your nerves. Brace up! The men of this town like new girls and you may catch a husband. We must put away our lunch, for it's time for the convention to begin.

[*Enter all the old maids very nearly together, all talking together, greeting one another, shaking hands, etc. They may enter from the sides of stage, but a very effective way has been found to be to come down the main aisle of the audience hall arm in arm, chattering*]

*all the way, and go up steps to the platform or stage. After all but Cleopatra Brown have reached the stage she can come down the aisle, waving her handkerchief, calling "Wait for me! Wait for me! Don't begin till I get there! I'm coming," etc. This creates a great deal of laughter and starts the fun going lively.]*

**President.** [*Knocks on table with gavel until there is silence.*] Fellow members of the Young Ladies' Single Blessedness Debating Society: Once more we are assembled standing firmly for the noble cause for which our club is formed, namely, viz., amelioration of the unhappy lot of that large class of unfortunates, single women, female women. The devising of ways and means of making its members attractive to the sterner sex, and, above all, the bringing of the loveless girl and the girlless lover together. Were I to sum up our principals, they would be expressed in one word. The magic word, MAN—[*Applause from all the old maids.*] MAN, the hope of every spinster heart, the lone star of her existence. The goal of her ambition. The radiant star of her dark sky. The glorious being of her adoration. [*Loud and prolonged applause.*] The Secretary will now proceed to call the roll, to which, my sisters, you will respond in your usual happy manner,

**Secretary.** [*Rises, calls roll from her book.*] Miss Josephine Jane Green. [*Sits.*]

**Pres.** [*Rises, advances to the front of stage, drops a courtesy to the Secretary, then faces audience.*] "The proper study of mankind is Man." [*Bows and retires to her seat, still standing.*] To spare her blushes, I will call the name of the Secretary, Priscilla Abigail Hodge! [*Sits.*]

**Sec.** [*Rises, bows to President, advances to front of stage.*] "What a piece of work is man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculty, in appearance how like a God! The beauty of the world." [*Bows, retires to seat, standing.*] Calamity Jane Higgins. [*Sits.*]

**Calamity.** [*Rises, bows to the President, advances to front of stage, faces audience.*] "Men may come and men may go, but I go on forever." [*Bows, retires to seat.*]

**Sec.** [*Rising.*] Rebecca Rachel Sharpe! [*Sits.*]

**Rebecca.** [*Does the same as Calamity.*] "Man's love is of man's life a thing apart, 'tis woman's whole existence." [*Bows and retires to former seat.*]

[*Each old maid, as her name is called, does the same as Calamity and Rebecca.*]

**Sec.** Tiny Short!

**Tiny.** "Oh, for a man that we might fight together!"

**Sec.** Mary Ann Fraddler!

**Mary Ann.** "His very foot hath music in it as it cometh up the stair."

**Sec.** Jerusha Matilda Spriggins!

**Jerusha.** [*Looking very sour.*] "Every prospect pleases and only man is vile."

[*The old maids look shocked.*]

**Sec.** Patience Desire Mann!

**Patience.** "A man's a man for a' that."

**Sec.** Sophia Stuckup!

**Sophia.** "Men love to hear of their power, but have an extreme disrelish to be told their duty."

**Sec.** Juliet Long!

**Juliet.** "Man wants but little here below, but wants that little l-o-n-g."

**Sec.** Betsy Bobbett!

**Betsy.** [*Waving heart-shaped fan, on which is printed in large type "Matrimony."*] "'Tis matrimony, 'tis matrimony, that is woman's spear."

**Sec.** Charity Longface!

**Charity.** "I'm not denying women are foolish, God Almighty made them so to match man."

**Sec.** Cleopatra Belle Brown!

**Cleopatra.** "Men are like drums, the ones having the biggest heads make the most noise."

**Sec.** Polly Jane Pratt!

**Polly.** "There is not a man in the world, no matter how insignificant, but what there is a girl somewhere in the world who considers him distinguished looking."

**Sec.** Violet Ann Ruggles!

**Violet.** "Men who their chances can improve, we prize."

**Sec.** Belinda Bluegrass!

**Belinda.** "Fond man! The vision of a moment made! Dream of a dream! and shadow of a shade!"

**Sec.** Miss President, Florinda Viola Kecham, we are pained to relate, is absent on a breach of promise suit. She sends this sentiment, "Blighted hearts can find surcease, in cold hard cash, only thus man finds release from his promise rash."

**Pres.** This closes the roll call. We will now all sing our greeting song. [*This must be sung with all possible discord; it must be ridiculous. One of the sisters may play the accompaniment, the others beat time with their parasols, or the President with her gavel.*]

Kind friend, we come to greet you,  
 Within these walls to-night,  
 With songs of joy we greet you,  
 Our hearts are happy and light.

*Chorus.*

We come, we come,  
 We come, kind friend, to meet you,  
 Our hearts are free,  
 And happy are we,  
 Yes, happy are we to greet you.

'Tis truly good and pleasant  
 As thus we pass along,  
 To meet our friends now present,  
 And sing our greeting song.

**Pres.** We will now listen to the reading of the minutes of the last meeting of the Young Ladies' Single Blessedness Debating Society.

**Sec.** [*Reads.*] The usual meeting of the Young Ladies' Single Blessedness Debating Society, occurred at the residence of [*One of the old maids.*] with the President in the chair. The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved. The committee on vigilance was next listened to. They reported the matrimonial outlook discouraging; not one of the sisters having had any progress in that direction. After some discussion as to ways and means, a committee, consisting of [*Here name three of the old maids.*] was appointed to frame a petition to Congress, concerning the whole rights of the fair sex, and to report at the next meeting. After the usual program of the evening, consisting of quotations on love, an interesting discussion on "How women do get married," a song by the sisterhood, "It is for love I sigh and pine," the meeting adjourned.

**Pres.** Unless there are some objections, the minutes stand approved. Is there any other business? We will now listen to the Treasurer's report.

**Calamity.** [*Bows to President and reads.*]

Cash on hand at last report . . . . .	\$87.50
Received for dues since . . . . .	24.75

Total . . . . .	<u>\$112.25</u>
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Disbursements—

Beauty powder . . . . .	\$3.25
Candy hearts and kisses . . . . .	5.30
Matrimonial journals . . . . .	2.00
Flowers for bachelors and widowers . . . . .	25.50
Expenses of Vigilant Committee . . . . .	16.60

Total . . . . .	<u>\$52.65</u>
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Balance . . . . .	\$59.60
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Respectfully submitted.

Calamity Jane Higgins, Treasurer.

**Pres.** Are there any remarks?

**Charity Longface.** I should like to know who is charging us so much for beauty powder.

**Calamity.** [*Names local druggist.*]

**Charity.** Well, it is too much. We can not have all we need at such prices. I move we boycott him.

**Sophia.** Oh, that's no use. I move to put the bill and the face powder on the shelf.

**Patience.** I second that motion.

**Cleopatra.** I third it.

**Pres.** Those in favor of the motion which has been seconded and thirded, to put the bill and face powder on the shelf, please signify it by the usual sign. [*All vote.*]

**Pres.** Those opposed by the same sign. [*All vote in the same way.*]

**Pres.** It is carried unanimously, and the Treasurer's report accepted. We will now listen to a piece on the piano, by [*Name one of the old maids who plays.*]

[*This old maid plays an old-fashioned piece like "Java Waltz," or "Sack Waltz." She begins to play with many flourishes, she suddenly breaks down dismally and bursts into tears.*]

**Player.** I have only taken three lessons in sheet music.

**Pres.** Of whom did you take lessons?

**Player.** [*Names a prominent local instructor.*]

**Pres.** Well, never mind, you'll soon do better.

**Sophia.** Try something else.

**Rebecca.** Oh, yes, play some more.

[*Player finally responds with "There is a Happy Land," or something similar.*]

**Pres.** We will now listen to a paper by Sophia Stuckup, on woman's rights.

**Sophia.** Ladies and Gentlemen—It is high time that we were arisin' our voices and make the hills

echo and reverberate with our clamors for the right. Ladies and Gentlemen: Why not, I ax you, shouldn't a woman be allowed to vote? Can't a woman read? Can't a woman write? Why shouldn't she be allowed to vote? That is the question of the day. Through the length and breadth of the land, we see millions of ignoramuses, rushing madly to the ballot-box and voting—voting—for what? Why, Ladies and Gentlemen, they don't know what they are voting for. They can't read. They can't cipher in long division, they can't spell their own names, they can't do nothing, but guzzle down red hot whisky. They vote just as somebody tells them to vote. Is it right, Ladies and Gentlemen? NO; a thousand times NO; women have never had their rights, they have been ill used, they have been trodden down as it were, they have been kept under. There are some men in [*Name of place.*] and even in this room, who, if they had wives, would see them wash all day, and mend pantaloons all night long, and then with brazen effrontery would say, that they were in their spears. But I say it isn't so. Women will not be in their spears until she can go to the ballot-box and deposit her vote; she will not be in her spear until she has all the rights a man has. Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, shouldn't women be allowed to vote? From the heights of Andrews to the Gibraltars of — County, may be heard one spontaneous YES. From the rice fields of Florida to the duck ponds of Maine, may be heard the ringing echo, YES.

I repeat it, Ladies and Gentlemen, women should be allowed to vote. [*Sits.*]

[*The old maids should applaud.*]

**Violet A. Ruggles.** [*Rises.*] Miss President, I have been requested by the management of [*Name local hotel.*] to read the rules of their house for the guidance of the public, and any of us who may want to stop there while in town. [*Reads.*]

Rule one—Board, fifty cents per square foot.

Rule two—Breakfast at eight, dinner at six, supper at seven.

Rule three—Guests are requested not to speak to the dumb waiter.

Rule four—Guests being willing to get up without being called, can have self-raising flour for supper.

Rule five—If your room gets too warm, open the window and see the fire escape.

Rule six—If you get thirsty, you will find a spring in the bed.

Rule seven—Any one troubled with nightmare, will find a halter on the bed post.

Rule eight—Don't worry about paying your bills, this hotel is supported by its foundation. [*Takes her scat.*]

**Polly.** I have a motion to make, that we stop at that hotel. [*Seconded and thirded; vote as before both for and against.*]

**Pres.** It is unanimously carried. We will now sing our club song, so touchingly beautiful as to melt the flintiest heart. "No One to Love."

[*All sing.*]

No one to love, none to caress,  
Roaming alone through this world's wilderness,  
Sad is my heart, joy is unknown,  
For in my sorrow I am weeping alone,  
No gentle voice, no tender smiles,  
Makes me rejoice, or cares beguile.

*Chorus, first four lines.*

In dreams alone loved ones I see,  
And well-known voices then whisper to me,  
Sighing I wake, waking I weep,  
Soon with the loved and lost I will sleep.  
Oh, blissful rest, what heart would stay,  
Unloved, unblest, from heaven away?



*Chorus.*

[*One of the sisters plays the accompaniment, all stand, another sister accustomed to singing steps forward and sings each verse, the rest join in the chorus with all possible discord. They sway to and fro in time to the music, some leaning on the other, all very lackadaisical; when she sings "For in my sorrow I am weeping alone," they should all put their handkerchiefs to their eyes and weep. In the most sentimental part the singer should put her hand on her heart and act it out.*]

[*All take seats.*]

**Pres.** Has any sister gleaned items of interest for our encouragement? If she has, we will listen to her.

**Cleopatra Belle Brown.** I should like to read the marriage statistics, which have been recently compiled.

[*The sisters must appear greatly interested.*]

Seventy-five per cent. of the women get married.

[*Applause.*]

Twenty per cent. between the ages of 15 and 20.

[*Too young.*]

Forty-five per cent. between the ages of 20 and 30.

[*Too young.*]

Eight per cent. between 30 and 40. [*Young enough.*]

Two per cent. between the ages of 40 and 50. [*Just right.*]

[*After each percentage give exclamations in concert.*]

[*As Cleopatra is returning to her seat, Mary Jane Faddler rushes out, screaming "Mouse! Mouse! Mouse!" at the top of her voice. The greatest confusion prevails; they must fairly shriek, to a woman; some get up on their chairs, and the President gets up on her table in her excitement. Jerusha Matilda Spriggins rushes out and kills the mouse with her parasol.*]

**Pres.** Ladies, I am astonished at you; how do you expect to catch a man if you cannot catch a mouse?  
[*Raps for order.*]

*[A knock is heard and Belinda Bluegrass goes to the door.]*

**Belinda Bluegrass.** Miss President, two candidates stand without and desire to be admitted as members of this society.

**Pres.** *[To circle.]* You have heard that two ladies desire admission to our society. What is your pleasure?

**Juliet.** I move they be admitted.

**Tiny.** I second the admittance.

**Pres.** You have heard the motion. Are there any remarks? If not, all in favor of admitting them into the society, make it known by the usual sign.

*[All rise, raise right hand and spell M-A-N, man.]*

**Pres.** Contrary, by the same sign. It is unanimously carried. Will Miss Bluegrass conduct the candidates to the front?

*[Belinda conducts two old maids to the front.]*

**Pres.** *[To candidates.]* You seek admission to the Young Ladies' Single Blessedness Debating Society? **Candidates.** We do.

**Pres.** In order that you may do so, are you willing to answer truthfully a few questions?

**Candidates.** We are.

**Pres.** *[To first candidate.]* What is your full name and age?

**First candidate.** My name is Frances Beautyspot Temptation Touchmenot, but, law, it has been so long since I was born, that I can't remember the day, and I haven't had a birthday for forty years. Birthdays make you get old too fast.

**Pres.** What is your occupation?

**Frances.** Oh, I'm a brain-worker. I work very hard tryin' to find some way of catchin' a husband.

**Pres.** Did you ever have a beau?

**Frances.** No, I never did. That's the reason I want to join this society. I want a beau first and a husband afterward.

**Pres.** [*To second candidate.*] What is your name?

**Second candidate.** Hanner Susanner Biggerstaff.

**Pres.** Your age?

**Hannah.** I'm forty to-day, anyway.

**Pres.** What is your occupation?

**Hannah.** Huntin' a husband. I ain't got time for anything else.

**Pres.** Did you ever have a beau?

**Hannah.** Yes, I had two of 'em.

**Pres.** Tell us about your first beau.

**Hannah.** He went home with me from Deacon Smith's candy pullin'. Next morning he was found dead outside our gate. Some said I talked him to death. I know he wasn't, for it was just ten o'clock when we got home and just four when he left, and you all know I couldn't talk a man to death in that short time.

**All.** Why, no, of course not.

**Pres.** Did your other beau ever propose?

**Hannah.** Came pretty nigh proposing.

**Pres.** How nigh?

**Hannah.** He squeezed my hand when he was helpin' me over a mud-puddle.

**Pres.** [*To both candidates.*] Will you both do all you can to secure husbands?

**Both.** We will.

**Pres.** The society will please rise and with these ladies renew its oath of allegiance. Raise your right hands. [*All do so.*] Do you solemnly promise by this box of complexion powder, these false teeth, this hair switch and all the paraphernalia that goes to make up an old maid, that whatever shall occur within these walls shall be sacredly guarded and kept within your own hearts?

**All.** We do.

**Pres.** The society may be seated. [*They sit. To candidates.*] Do you solemnly promise by these suspenders, these cuff-buttons, this pouch of tobacco, this pipe, these cigars, and all the luxuries which a

bachelor so selfishly enjoys, that you will do all within your power to promote the interests of this society and secure husbands for yourselves during the coming year?

**Both.** We do.

**Pres.** Are you ready to take upon yourselves the sign of this order.

**Both.** We are.

**Pres.** The Secretary will place upon the palm of your right hand the mystic letter M, symbolical of man, maid, matrimony. [*The Secretary marks palms.*] Gazing upon this letter may you ever be reminded of the solemn obligations you have taken upon yourselves. The ladies will now come forward and welcome you as members of our society.

[*All shake hands, gradually taking their original chairs, and then join in the following song.*]

### SONG.

(Tune, "Baby Mine.")

We are laying plans to catch you,  
Bachelor mine, bachelor mine!  
In this convention hall,  
Bachelor mine, bachelor mine!  
Oh, what a grand surprise,  
When we look into your eyes,  
Where all our kingdom lies,  
Hubby mine, hubby mine!

**Pres.** We will now listen to Rebecca Sharpe recite the Psalm of Marriage.

**Rebecca.**

### THE PSALM OF MARRIAGE.

Tell me not in idle jingle,  
Marriage is an empty dream,  
For the girl is dead that's single,  
And things are not what they seem.  
Life is real, life is earnest,  
Single blessedness a fake,

Life is long, and youth is fleeting,  
 And our hearts, tho' light and gay,  
 Still like muffled drums are beating  
 Wedding marches all the way.  
 In the world's broad field of battle,  
 In the bivouac of life,  
 Be not like dumb driven cattle,  
 Be a heroine, a wife:  
 Let us then be up and doing,  
 With a heart on triumph set,  
 Still the bachelors pursuing,  
 Till we each a husband get.

**Pres.** You know, my dear sisters, our constitution requires the Secretary to keep a list of the names of those men eligible to matrimony, with their degree of willingness, and that these reports be read from time to time for our encouragement.

*[She uses the names of any unmarried men and has the terms suit as well as possible.]*

**Sec.** *[Reads.]* E. H. S., Fluctuating.—H. R. S., Rarely steady.—Captain U. W. V., Immovable.—F. R., Cornered.—I. O., Out of the market. Nothing doing. In demand, Fairly active, Foreign market quiet. Slow—regular. Very uncertain. Gone to the highest bidder. To be had for the asking. *[This report can be used or not as desired.]*

**Pres.** You will remember, my sisters, inasmuch as we found that matrimonial depression goes hand in hand with financial depression, we felt moved to apply to Congress in our behalf. We will listen to the report of the chairman of the committee.

**Jerusha Spriggins.** *[Reads.]*

## PETITION.

Miss President and Sisters of the Young Ladies' Single Blessedness Society. *[Bows to the sisters, after having bowed to the President.]* To that high minded

and honorable body of men who compose the Government of the United States of America:

Whereas, The past three years have seen the hopes of several of the dearest, oldest and most fated sisters and members of the justly celebrated Young Ladies' Single Blessedness Society, almost realized, but for the north wind of financial distress, which has been, and is, sweeping over the land, and which, instead of blowing love's flames to warmer glow, has, alas, quenched the altar of fires of pure love, and unless something is done, and that quickly, they appear likely to stay unaltered, therefore, the Young Ladies' Single Blessedness Society do pray Congress to take some measures to alleviate said present financial distress, and the consequent depressing effect on the matrimonial market.

We pray that as they have decided for GOLD, they will either give this Club a gold mine, or else present to each member thereof a carload of gold dollars, so as to make her attractive to the lone man. We also beg them to command President McKinley to instantly pass a protective law for the unmarried.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman of Committee.

**Sophia Stuckup.** I move it be accepted. [*President puts it to vote. Vote as before.*]

**Rebecca Sharpe.** [*Rising.*] Miss President: This committee was empowered to frame this petition, but after spending many days looking at the many beautiful frames at [*Name some local dealer.*] we are unable to agree upon the frame, and decided to leave it to the taste of sisterhood.

[*Let each sister break in with her own preference, such as "I want gilt," "Let it be oxidized silver," "Chestnut would be nice," "Oak with an ivy vine would be suggestive." Let much confusion prevail, still let the exclamations follow each other so as to be*

*heard. This takes practice. The President finally secures order after much pounding.]*

**Pres.** Let us come to order, my sisters. This matter is of so grave importance that we shall have to defer it until the next meeting. No doubt those noble, noble Congressmen will have this petition hung in the most conspicuous place in the Senate Halls, and the names of the Young Ladies' Single Blessedness Society will go thundering down the ages; so it is important that the frame should be well chosen.

**Charity.** [*Rises.*] Miss President, excuse me, I ask for information—I thought to frame a petition meant to write it; am I wrong?

[*Voice.*] "How absurd!"

**Pres.** The language is plain English. Congress has so many petitions that if they were not framed and hung up they could not keep them in mind. We will proceed to other business. It is *love, love*, my sisters, that gives the true poetic fire. We have all poured out our souls in poetic measures and you would, no doubt, like to read your verses for our entertainment, but we will have time to-night for only one poem. I will ask sister Betsey Bobbett to favor us with one of her original poems.

**Betsey Bobbett.** [*Rises, bows to President and passes to front.*]

Josiah I have hearn  
With rigid ear and streaming eyes,  
I saw from me you did turn,  
I never knew the reason why,  
Oh, Josiah, it seems I must expiah.

I saw thee walking down the street,  
She by thy side in bonnet blue,  
The stuns that grated 'neath thy feet,  
Seemed crushing out my vitals too,  
Oh, Josiah, it seems I must expiah.

Why did you, oh, why did you blow,  
 Upon my life of snowy sleet,  
 The fiahs of love to fiercest glow,  
 Then turn a damper on the heat?  
 Oh, Josiah, it seems I must expiah.

I saw thee washing sheep last night,  
 On the bridge I stood with marble brow,  
 The waters raged, thou clasped it tight,  
 I sighed, should you be drowned, now  
 I thought, oh, happy sheep to thus expiah.

[*Takes seat.*]

[*The sisters sigh, and wipe their eyes.*]

[*Knock at door. The Secretary goes and opens it, speaks in whisper to some one outside, then turns.*]

**Sec.** Miss President, Dr. Killemoff is outside, and wishes to speak to Violet Ann Ruggles.

**Pres.** Miss Ruggles will go at once, or sooner if possible.

**Violet.** [*Rises.*]

Oh, sisters dear, good-bye, good-bye,  
 To my dear doctor I would fly,  
 Oh, Rebecca Sharpe, he is not thine,  
 But now and evermore he's mine.

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[*Goes out running.*]

**Rebecca.** Well, she'll get the biggest mitten she ever got, for he told me last night she had written him a leap year proposal and that he should see her to-day and tell her he was engaged to me. We are going to be married February 31st. And I'm going to invite you all to my wedding.

**All.** How nice!

**Pres.** We will continue our program by singing our favorite, "Why Don't the Men Propose?"



## WHY DON'T THE MEN PROPOSE?

(Tune, "Don't Stay Out After Ten.")

## I.

Why don't the men propose, oh, dear,  
Why don't the men propose?  
Each seems just coming to the point,  
And then away he goes.  
I'm sure it is no fault of ours,  
As everybody knows,  
We fête the finest men in town,  
Yet, oh, they won't propose.

*Chorus.*

They won't, they won't, they won't, they won't,  
They won't, they won't propose,  
They won't, they won't, they won't, they won't,  
Oh, dear, they won't propose.

## II.

I'm sure we've done our very best,  
To make a proper match,  
For coronets and oldest sons  
We're ever on the watch.  
We've hopes some distinguished beau  
A glance on us bestows,  
But though he'll dance and sing and flirt,  
Alas! he won't propose.

*Chorus.*

## III.

Oh, what is to be done, oh, dear,  
Oh, what is to be done?  
We really have no time to lose,  
For we are sixty-one.  
At balls we are too often left  
Where spinsters sit in rows,  
Why don't the men propose, oh, dear,  
Why don't the men propose.

*Chorus.*

**Pres.** I will ask the chairman of the vigilance committee to read her report.

**Calamity.** [*Rises and reads.*] By diligent correspondence we are able to report cheerful tidings. We have ascertained beyond the possibility of a doubt that there is a town in the Klondike where there is a number of single men and very few women.

**Cleopatra.** [*Jumps to her feet.*] Can't we start at once?

**Belinda.** There's no time to lose, others may get there before us.

**Polly.** I wonder if there will be enough to go 'round.

[*Let the general excitement be intense.*]

**Juliet.** I am going, I just am.

**Jerusha.** So am I. How soon can we get ready? My heart aches for those lonely men.

**Pres.** [*Knocking on table with gavel until she finally has silence.*] I am in favor of this emigration scheme. Let us go en masse, my sisters; such an aggregation of full ripe beauty will take their hearts by storm. But, oh, if we only could be *made over* before we go! [*"Made over" should be said plainly.*] But we will now sing our last appeal to the bachelors of this town.

## APPEAL TO THE [*Name of town.*] BACHELORS.

### I.

Go tell the bachelors, [*Name of town.*] bachelors,  
Cold-hearted bachelors, we'll not despair.  
Cupid will assist us, they can't resist us,  
When they behold our beauty so rare.

### *Chorus.*

We long to meet them, sweetly to greet them,  
Please go entreat them, yes, one and all,  
Ugly or comely, handsome or homely,  
Rich men, or poor men, short men or tall.

## II.

Bring all the bachelors, warm-hearted widowers,  
Bald-headed widowers, bring them every one.  
When we've allured them, then we'll secure them,  
Then we'll receive the plaudits: Girls, well done!

*Chorus.*

## III.

We're young and pretty, graceful and witty,  
Though we are timid, bashful and so shy,  
As we grow older, we may grow bolder,  
Then we may get husbands, all, by and by.

*Chorus.*

**Pres.** The matter of personal appearance has often been discussed at our conventions. The time has now come when we must take a decided stand either for or against Dress Reform. We have selected the two strongest debaters of our Society to give their views pro and con, and will now listen to their arguments, after which we will decide by vote whether or not we will adopt Dress Reform. I need not urge you to give their words your close attention. We will first listen to Miss Belinda Bluegrass, who, as we all know, favors Dress Reform.

**Belinda.** Miss President, and Fellow Spinsters, as you have heard, we—this worthy band of sisters—are contemplating a journey; and with a most *noble* object in view. We are going in search of husbands. Not willingly do we decry our own enterprising towns, but it must be admitted that on their matrimonial boards of trade the market is *long on women* and *short on men*! And that it is especially over-stocked with such members of the gentler sex as have already attained to years of discretion, and are really calculated—and calculating—to make some man a happy bridegroom. This being the case, and we having decided, as a club, to take our matrimonial wares to a less crowded mar-

ket, the next most important subject for our consideration is how we shall equip ourselves for our journey. I, as you see, am an advocate of Dress Reform; and can I present a stronger argument in its favor than my own appearance to-night? And a male being is responsible for this! Many years ago—when I was a young and blushing maiden of but thirty summers—I *was* to have *wed a man!* But, alas! I did not! In that hour of woe, to find solace for my disappointment, I turned to literature and to cooking, to music and to slumming, to art and to social economics; but in nothing did I find such sweet solace as in the profound study of Dress Reform. Then first I adopted this costume. Lovers by the score flocked around me, but not having recovered from my disappointment, I rejected them one and all. Ah, foolish girl of thirty that I was! Little did I appreciate then the true value of youth and beauty! Let me assure the Vigilance Committee, that if it knows of any available man, with a heart and hand at his disposal, I would like him notified that I am waiting to meet him, and that I shall not allow my early bereavement to come between us. That is a thing of the long-gone past. We live in an age of advancement, and *we must* advance! So with our clothes, we must reform, we must advance. The dictates of reason are all in favor of the adoption of this costume. It is beautiful, it is graceful, it is convenient. Can anything exceed the simplicity of my get-up? And simplicity is the essence of true beauty. And can any one propel herself with more ease than I—or run more gracefully than I to catch a car? And on our trip we will have no microbe-catching trails, no bothering skirts to hold up, but can get about conveniently, changing cars and attending to our baggage. And when we arrive at our destination, what an *excellent* impression we will make upon the “lords of creation” who will gather to look us over! Their first thought will be, surely these comely and sensibly arrayed damsels will be good bread-makers,

and even, perhaps, good "bread-winners." And with that conviction appealing to their consciousness, they will fairly *rush* to beg us to accept them as our life-long companions!

Stronger plea for Dress Reform than this, I cannot make!

**Pres.** After this able speech there would seem to be no other side to this question, but perhaps Miss Rebecca Rachel can open our eyes to it. We will now hear what she has to say in opposition.

**Rebecca.** Miss President, and Beloved Sisters! In choosing me as the opponent of Sister Belinda Bluegrass you have chosen the most timid, bashful, modest member of our society. I leave it to my sisters. But I will try to lay aside my modesty and speak my convictions. Upon you, most honored judges, rests great responsibility, for not only does the welfare of our sisters rest upon your decision, but that of the future generations of womankind. My opponent has said that no stronger argument in favor of Dress Reform can she use than her appearance here to-night. What stronger argument in favor of my side of the question can I use than my appearance? Look upon us both, and then judge between us! We certainly do live in an age of advancement, and I hold with my sister that we *should* advance in a great many things; but in the matter of dress, only so far as we can add beauty to our general appearance, thereby making ourselves more attractive to the stronger sex. Where is there a man who does not prefer a modestly-attired maiden like myself to one whose attire partakes so much of the masculine elements as does that of my sister? If we adopt Dress Reform, what will become of poetry! The Romeos and Juliets of the future, instead of dying in each other's arms as lovers should, when love seems hopeless, will take the automobile route to Milwaukee.

There is a little poem written by one of our bards of old. I think it is Shakespeare, but I am not quite

sure. I have always been a great admirer of Shakespeare. It is a little poem which pleased me wonderfully. I cannot exactly recall the words, but it is something about man being the stalwart oak and woman the clinging ivy-vine. It is a beautiful sentiment, and should find an echo in every human heart. Every day do we see it demonstrated that man is the stalwart oak, but alas! less often is woman content to be the clinging vine! So many of them are trying to make the vine stand alone. It cannot be done! We must cling if we would be attractive, and I say, let us cling. As to ease and convenience, where is there a woman in this wide world who would not suffer martyrdom for the sake of her appearance? As to the big hat at the opera, it attracts men's attention to the wearer, even if it does slightly interfere with their view of the stage, and it is their attention that we desire, for we all know that attention is half the battle.

My sisters, when I look around me and see the many lost opportunities here gathered, my heart sinks within me like a lump of lead; but when my gaze turns towards the west, where the golden sun of opportunity is rising upon our horizon, my heart becomes as light as a feather, and I say, and you say, there must *be* no such word as fail. Let us see to it that the exterior of the temple is brilliantly illuminated; then, when we reach our destination, with what joy will we inspire those lords of creation who will all have heard of our approach and will be gathered there to meet us! They will cry, "Behold, those noble maidens, beautifully arrayed, come to our rescue," and they will fall down upon their knees in admiration and beseech us to accept them as our lifelong companions and protectors, to give to them the privilege of caring for and making happy—a woman!

My sisters, I say, let us cling!

**Pres.** You have heard both sides of this question. Are you ready to vote?

**All.** We are.

**Pres.** Those in favor of Dress Reform will signify it by saying "Aye." [*Silence.*] Those opposed, by saying "No."

**All.** No!

**Pres.** We will cling.

[*A knock should be heard.*]

**Betsy Bobbett.** That sounds like the knock of a man.

**Sec.** [*Goes to door, looks out and turns to convention much excited.*] It is a man. [*Gives President card.*]

**Pres.** [*Reads.*] "Professor Make-over."

[*They all begin to straighten bonnets, fix their hair; bringing out hand-glasses, powder-puffs, etc. After this hesitation, the Secretary opens door. Enter Prof. Make-over, followed by his assistant, who carries a large carpetbag or valise.*]

**Pres.** You are welcome, Prof. Make-over, your fame has preceded you, and caused a flutter in each maiden heart. [*Prof. bows.*] Ladies, let me present to you Prof. Make-over, who comes to us with his remodeloscope to transform us all into blooming young ladies.

**Prof. M.** [*Placing his hand on his heart.*] Ladies, I am charmed to be at this old maids' convention.

[*Interrupted by contemptuous chorus.*] "We are not old maids."

**Pres.** This is the Young Ladies' Single Blessedness Debating Society.

**Prof.** I beg your pardon, but this seems to be the sort of a society that I am looking for. My wonderful remodeloscope is just short of a miracle in its workings. I can transfer the oldest, ugliest, oh—ah—excuse me, the plainest lady of uncertain age, so you would think her a blushing bud of sixteen. Your style of beauty may be blonde, or brunette, long or short, slight or stout, you express to me your wish, you enter my machine, you are ground up, and lo, you come forth with your wish gratified.

**Betsy.** Does one ever turn back?

**Prof.** You will never turn back. I——

**Tiny.** How much does it cost?

**Prof.** It costs only testimonials as to its success. I have traveled all over Europe and the United States, and in each and every hamlet and village through which we have traveled, I have living monuments of my remodeloscope. I have also testimonials from these living monuments, but they are so voluminous that I will not take up your valuable time by reading all of them. I have one from Susan B. Anthony, of the neighboring city, [*Name some neighboring town.*] who is a member of your society, and, with your kind permission, will read it. [*Cries of "Read it, read it."* *Prof. reads.*] "To all sisters and spinsters of the Young Ladies' Single Blessedness Debating Society: You cannot imagine the wonderful and miraculous transformation produced by Prof. Make-over's remodeloscope. It is a boon that our tender young have longed for in vain. Dear sisters, you will realize how great the transformation is when I tell you that I was remodeled when Prof. Make-over was here and, sisters, since that short time, only eight short months, I have had three proposals, been married twice, have had one divorce and made application for the second. Dear sisters, what more could you wish for?

Yours in sisterhood and love,

Susan B. Anthony.

[*During the reading all gather together and fill up stage, so that the Professor's machine may be brought in and all arranged without attracting too much attention. At last all take seats again, while still showing much excitement.*]

**Prof.** Now, if one of the ladies will oblige me and step forward, I will demonstrate the truth of what I have said.

[*All move forward in a body. The Professor looks bewildered.*]



**Prof.** Perhaps your President will designate one lady to come first. I also wish to caution the ladies to tell their exact age, that is imperative. If the age is not correctly given most disastrous results are likely to follow.

**Pres.** Patience Desire Mann, you may go first.

**Prof.** What would you like to be, Miss?

**Patience.** I long to be beautiful and to sing. I want to be a bud. I am tired of being an American beauty, full blown.

*[She must act very much afraid. As each one tells what she desires to be the Prof. should repeat it after her, so as to be sure that the audience knows what she is to be made into.]*

**Prof.** Have no fears, Miss, the operation is painless. What is your age? *[She hesitates.]* Please make it exact.

*[Patience whispers in his ear and rushes into the machine. He fixes the dial at forty-seven, oils the crank and his assistant turns the wheel. A beautiful young woman appears.]*

**Prof.** *[Bows to the circle.]* You see? what could be fairer?

*[The old maids crowd around her, rub her cheeks, feel her arms and hair and admire her. Then she steps to the front and sings. This program must be made to fit the talent available.]*

*The President now designates another old maid, weight, two hundred pounds, who wishes to be made into a little girl. A little girl five years old comes out and sings. Next a very tall and a very short lady ask to be made into twins. Two ladies as similar as possible, and dressed alike, come out and play a duet or give a Delsarte exercise. Another old maid may be made into a pianist. One who is the oldest looking is anxious all the time to be made over, but the Prof. keeps holding her back on one pretext or another, fearing that she is too old for the machine. She insists so*

hard that he finally lets her try it. It has no effect on her and she is ground up unchanged, and, after running to the glass and seeing that there is no change, she is so angry that she leaves the room. The one with the dog asks to be made a *Prima Donna*, but is not willing to leave the dog behind. The Prof. warns her that he will not be responsible if the dog is ground up. She persists and takes it into the machine with her. A soprano appears in evening costume, ablaze with jewels, and carrying a string of sausage. She should sing in an exaggerated manner like an opera singer. The next one wants to be sweet sixteen. A fairy. A butterfly. A young lady comes out and recites. Another wants to be made into a man, but as it takes two women to make one good man, another must go with her. The result is a man who sings a solo.

The President, or another old maid, desires to be made into Trilby. She insists her age is twenty. The Prof. calls her attention to the danger of not giving correct age, but she persists. The Prof. tears his hair, walks the floor, wringing his hands, but finally consents to try. The attempt is made, the machine breaks down amid the shrieks of the victim. Shoes, hat and mantle and one of her bones fly from the top of the machine. Frightful noises are heard, as of the breaking of glass, boards, etc. The Prof. throws up his hands, saying, "My precious machine, my precious machine is broken." Rushes about the stage exclaiming, "My precious machine." Ladies chasing him with umbrellas; he rushes across and back as many times as possible before the curtain falls and all is over.

If it is given in the church, and there is no curtain, the ladies chase the Prof. behind the screen.]

[Another ending may be given when there is no good talent to call upon. Each old maid may be remodeled into a young girl. The young girls should all wear Empire or classic dresses alike, and in the end give a fancy drill to close the entertainment.]

# DIAMONDS AND HEARTS

## A Comedy Drama in Three Acts.

By EFFIE W. MERRIMAN.

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Price, 25 Cents.

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This new play has bounded at once into a wide popularity. The good plot, the strong "heart" interest, and the abundant comedy all combine to make a most excellent drama. "Bub" Barnes is a fine character of the Josh Whitcomb type, and his sister is a worthy companion "bit." Sammy is an exuberantly funny little ducky. The other characters are good. Fine opportunity for introducing specialties. The play has so many good points that it never fails to be a success.

### CAST OF CHARACTERS.

BERNICE HALSTEAD, a young lady of eighteen, with an affection of the heart, a love for fun and hatred of arithmetic.....  
AMY HALSTEAD, her sister, two years younger, fond of frolic....  
INEZ GRAY, a young lady visitor willing to share in the fun....  
MRS. HALSTEAD, a widow, and stepmother to the Halstead girls.  
HANNAH MARY BARNES, or "Sis," a maiden lady who keeps house for her brother.....  
DWIGHT BRADLEY, a fortune hunter and Mrs. Halstead's son by a former marriage.....  
DR. BURTON, a young physician.....  
SAMMY, the ducky bell-boy in the Halstead house.....  
ABRAHAM BARNES, or "Bub," a yankee farmer still unmarried at forty—a diamond in the rough.....  
ATTORNEY; SHERIFF.....

Time of playing, two hours.

Two interior scenes. Modern costumes.

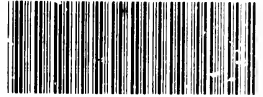
### SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS:

ACT I. Parlor of the Halstead home. The young doctor. The three girls plot to make his acquaintance. An affection of the heart. "Easy to fool a young doctor," but not so easy after all. The stepmother and her son. The stolen diamonds. The missing will. Plot to win Bernice. "I would not marry Dwight Bradley for all the wealth the world contains." Driven from home.

ACT. II. Kitchen of the Barnes' farm house, Bub takes off his boots. The new school ma'am. "Supper's ready." "This is our nephew and he's a doctor." Recognition. A difficult problem in arithmetic. The doctor to the rescue. "I'm just the happiest girl in the world." "I've come to pop the question, an' why don't I do it?" Brother and sister. "If it's a heifer, it's 'eh be mine." The sheriff. Arrested for stealing the diamonds. "Let me knock yer durned head off." The jewels found in Bernice's trunk.

ACT. III. Parlor of the Halstead home. "That was a lucky stroke—hiding those diamonds in her trunk." The schemer's plot miscarries. Abe and Sammy join hands. The lawyer. "Bully for her." Bradley tries to escape. "No, yeh don't!" Arrested. "It means, dear, that you are to be persecuted no more." Wedding presents, and a war dance around them. "It is no trick at all to fool a young doctor."

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